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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Friday, October 6, 1944

SUBJECT: Autumn's Golden Vegetables

Information from the Bureau of Human
Nutrition and Home Economics, U. S. Depart-
ment of Agriculture

Wise homemakers follow the colors. And autumn's the time when yellow vegetables, rich in vitamin A, may be found in home gardens and are available on the market.

Gold, brown and russet - squashes, sweet potatoes and pumpkins fit into the rich color scheme of autumn. But it's the flesh inside that counts, according to food specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture.

When shopping for squash or pumpkin, or choosing those from the home grown crop to save, select the ones that feel heavy for their size. Pick the vegetables with a hard rind. Lightweight pumpkins, or those with soft rinds, are usually immature. And those that appear damp or water soaked may not keep.

Of course, you can use the less choice sweet potatoes, pumpkins and squashes for cooking right now. Don't wait until winter to begin serving autumn's golden vegetables. Enjoy them now, while they're garden fresh and richest in vitamins. In a few minutes, I'm going to tell you how to make a mighty good sweet potato dish.

But first, let's talk about putting some of these golden vegetables up for winter use. Squash, sweet potatoes and pumpkin keep best in a rather warm place. When they're exposed to the cold for any length of time, the quality of these vegetables goes down. The ideal temperature for them is about 55 degrees Fahrenheit, but they'll keep well as high as 70 degrees. So store them in a rather warm place. Maybe there's a spot in the basement near the furnace. Pick good vegetables for storage. Don't handle them any more than is absolutely necessary. Bruises and cuts invite decay and unnecessary handling causes bruises and cuts.

Although storage is one of the easiest and best ways to care for fall vegetables, you'll find that canning pumpkin or winter squash is a good way to have them ready quick when you need them. Then too, if you have a fair-sized pumpkin, you'll probably have more than your family needs at one meal.

You'll need a pressure cooker to can pumpkin or squash. Here are the directions for canning pumpkin given by food specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture. You can winter squash just the same way.

Wash, peel and cut the pumpkin into one inch cubes. Add just a small quantity of water and bring to a boil. Then the pumpkin is ready to pack, piping hot, into the jars. Put a teaspoon of salt in each quart and cover with the water in which the pumpkin was cooked. That's all you have to do to get the pumpkin ready for processing. Just cut it up into small pieces - one inch cubes. Cook in a little amount of water until the pumpkin is boiling hot. Then pack in jars and add a teaspoon of salt to each quart. Cover with water the pumpkin was cooked in. And the pumpkin is ready for the pressure cooker.

Now, as to the time of processing. For quart glass jars of pumpkin or squash, canning specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture advise processing an hour and three-quarters at 240 degrees Fahrenheit or 10 pounds pressure. In case you want to can your pumpkin or squash in pint jars, process them an hour and 25 minutes. The time for quart jars is an hour and three-quarters at 240 degrees Fahrenheit or 10 pounds pressure. For pint jars, an hour and 25 minutes at 240 degrees or 10 pounds pressure.

Pie still remains the happy ending for all good pumpkins. One of the best opportunities for a cook to show her originality too. Probably no two families are agreed upon the best combination of spices in their pumpkin pies, but most of them do agree that the pumpkin pie must be rich with eggs and top milk. Some like cider added. Others like their pumpkin pie made with egg whites or gelatin into a chiffon pie.

Squash and sweet potatoes make good pie fillings too. However, the filling made from sweet potato pulp requires more milk, less sugar and different spices than the pumpkin filling.

And now for the recipe, I told you about at the beginning of this broadcast. A sweet potato dish to lend a cheery note to autumn meals. It's scalloped sweet potatoes with apples and you can serve it in the dish it's baked in.

Here're the directions. Just cook the sweet potatoes in boiling water until they're tender. Then cool and peel them. Then place alternate layers of cooked sliced sweet potato and raw sliced apple. Sprinkle each layer with sugar and salt. Dot with table fat. Add a little water and bake for 30 to 45 minutes. It's done when the apples are soft and the top layer is brown.

Treat your family to autumn's golden vegetables. There are enough for a good variety. You can have baked Acorn squash one day, scalloped sweet potatoes with apples the next, pumpkin pie the next. There are endless varieties on this golden theme.

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